

Impact on CIA of Higher Retirement Age and Related Changes

- Retirement at 50 made available in recognition of dangers and burdens of the work, early burn-out potential and need for prospect of rapid advancement to attract quality of recruits required.
- People who committed their careers on this basis view withdrawal as a breach of faith.
- All at CIA believe that our best and most valuable people are likely to leave in large numbers to begin second careers now if retirement terms are significantly altered.
- Enough will leave to seriously set back rebuilding of intelligence currently under way and result in loss of critical skills.
- Managers are deeply concerned that extending the age of retirement, as contemplated by the retirement proposals and the Social Security legislation, will make it difficult to retain current employees and attract new individuals possessing critical skills who are willing to make a career in intelligence. We cannot maintain either security or a professional intelligence service if we must rely upon people who are only willing to come to CIA for a few years of excitement and then feel that they must leave in order to earn a salary and retirement benefits appropriate to their skills.
- Loss of early retirement would impair our ability to compete with the private sector for high-level talent in critical scientific and technological areas, where we are currently able to hold people who can double their earnings any day. We'd lose hundreds of these people very quickly if the arrangements on which they rely for their family's security were suddenly taken away.
- We are in trouble if we begin to attract persons who come to or stay at CIA only because they have no other employment opportunities. Before they reach age 65, CIA officers are often compromised and their effectiveness diminished; others are not up to the particular rigors of Agency assignments.
- Retirement at ages earlier than elsewhere in the government also has been a key feature of our personnel management system because such attrition created sufficient promotion opportunities for promising officers. Extending the retirement age will have a devastating long-term impact on the promotion aspirations of our best young officers and will impair the ability of Agency managers to attract and retain skilled professional employees.